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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 004762

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK'S NAIROBI MEETING WITH
AU ENVOY SALIM (NAIROBI, SAFARI PARK HOTEL, NOVEMBER 8,
2005)

Classified By: D Chief of Staff Chris Padilla, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Deputy Secretary Zoellick met with AU Special Envoy Salim Salim at the start of a day of meetings intended to address the rift within the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). The Deputy Secretary and Mediator agreed that the international community should act together to encourage the SLM to achieve a common negotiating team. Salim anticipated three potential scenarios: re-unification of the SLM, agreement between the different factions to adopt a common negotiating strategy, or establishment of two distinct organizations. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) PARTICIPANTS:

USG:

Deputy Secretary Zoellick

A/S Jendayi Frazer

NSC Cindy Courville

NSC Mike Gerson

D Chief of Staff Chris Padilla

Amb. John Yates

D Special Assistant Taiya Smith

Embassy Notetaker Lisa Peterson

AFRICAN UNION:

Dr. Salim Salim, Special Envoy

Amb. Baba Gana Kingibe, Special Representative

Amb. Christophe Liundi, Assistant to Salim

(one additional support person not identified)

3. (C) Zoellick expressed concern about the divisions within the SLM and ongoing violations of the cease-fire, which he thought could be an indication of break-down in command and control within the SLM. He emphasized that the SLM could not win militarily, and its divisions were providing an opportunity for the government to manipulate the peace talks. Salim agreed, saying the government could attend the talks in Abuja and appear cooperative because the SLM were creating the major obstacles in the talks.

4. (C) Zoellick noted a recent sense that the balance of power was shifting within the SLM, with Minni appearing more successful. However, given the collective nature of the SLM leadership, even Minni's position was somewhat fragile. Salim was not surprised that Minni had been able to draw in a large number of participants to his recent conference because Abdulwahid had effectively driven away a number of his commanders with his stubborn insistence that he remains the chairman. In the interest of stability, it is important to take both factions seriously. Kingibe cautioned against attributing too much success to Minni's recent initiative. Many of Darfur's smaller tribes, he said, have serious reservations about Minni.

5. (C) Zoellick said the international community must work together to push the SLM to unify, respect the cease-fire, and issue a short written statement publicly committing themselves to these actions. As a carrot, the U.S. would be prepared to help with the negotiations if the SLM could achieve these steps. If not, a stick would be loss of international support and, potentially, targeting the rebels with existing UN sanctions. Salim noted that the international partners, working seriously together, could make a difference to the success or failure of the peace process. The Declaration of Principles had been successfully negotiated in part because there was a common position among the international players.

6. (C) Salim described three possible scenarios for developments within the SLM: 1.) the SLM unites and re-enters negotiations as a single entity; 2.) the SLM does not unite, but is able to establish a common negotiating position; or 3.) two separate SLMs come to the next round of negotiations. Whatever the outcome, Salim said those negotiating need to be truly representative of the people of Darfur and be capable of producing action on the ground.

7. (C) Kingibe said he thought the Khartoum government was not psychologically prepared to understand the need to move forward with the Darfur negotiations. He said government forces are now working more brazenly with their allied militias. He also expressed concern about the potential for the current conflict to spill over into Chad. In response to the placement of helicopter gunships at the airport at El

Geneina, the Chadian Government has moved its forces to prevent any kind of move from Sudan that could lead to the fall of Abeche. Each side, he said, suspects the other of providing succor to its rebels.

18. (C) Kingibe noted a need to emphasize the AU Mission in Sudan's (AMIS) right of free passage in Darfur. Minni has repeatedly stated that he never agreed to an AMIS presence and therefore is not obligated to respect the terms of its deployment. This has contributed to maverick behavior on the part of the rebels.

19. (C) Zoellick inquired about the AU's mandate in Darfur and whether it needs to be expanded. He asked about the possibility of NATO providing planning support, or linking up the southern peacekeeping operation with the AU mission. Kingibe thought the current mandate was sufficient, although it could be amended to specifically include protection responsibilities. Zoellick assured him that, if he felt a stronger mandate were necessary, the U.S. would support such a call. In terms of linking AMIS and UNMIS, Kingibe thought it best to keep the two operations separate, establishing an end state for the AMIS operation, providing for a degree of interface between the two operations, and ultimately handing the operation over to UNMIS.

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